

Message Text

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ACTION CU-03

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FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1670

AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI

AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMCONSUL DHAHRAN

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY MANAMA

AMEMBASSY MUSCAT

AMEMBASSY SANAA

INFO USINT BAGHDAD

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KUWAIT PASS DOHA FOR ACTION

EO 11652: NA DECON 12/4/75

TAGS: SCUL XF

SUBJ: AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF BEIRUT SEEKS DIALOGUE WITH
INFLUENTIAL ME PERSONALITIES IN FIELDS OF DEVELOPMENT AND
EDUCATION

1. SCHOOL OF ARTS AND SCIENCES AT AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF
BEIRUT (AUB) -- IN SEARCHING FOR WAYS IN WHICH TO RENDER ITS
PROGRAMS AND CURRICULA MORE RELEVANT AND RESPONSIVE TO
CHANGING TRENDS AND DEVELOPING NEEDS IN ME AS WHOLE --
HAS COME UP WITH IDEA OF SPONSORING A ONE-DAY CONFERENCE
IN BEIRUT. PERSONALITIES WHO ARE INFLUENTIAL IN FIELDS
OF EDUCATION AND DEVELOPMENT IN VARIOUS ARAB COUNTRIES
-- PARTICULARLY GULF STATES AND SAUDI ARABIA -- WOULD
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BE INVITED TO PARTICIPATE, ALONG WITH SELECTED MEMBERS

OF AUB FACULTY AND ADMINISTRATION. PURPOSE OF CONFERENCE WOULD BE TO FOSTER EXCHANGE OF IDEAS ABOUT WAYS IN WHICH AUB COULD PLAN MORE HELPFUL AND EFFECTIVE ROLE IN CONTRIBUTING TO DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS IN ME GENERALLY. REPRESENTATIVES OF UN (E.G., ECWA AND UNDP) AND PRIVATE AGENCIES (E.G., FORD FOUNDATION AND AMERICAN FRIENDS OF ME) CONCERNED WITH EDUCATION AND DEVELOPMENT WOULD ALSO BE INVITED TO TAKE PART.

2. AUB SPOKESMEN ATTENDING CONFERENCE WOULD OUTLINE UNIVERSITY'S PAST AND PRESENT PERFORMANCE IN CONTRIBUTING TO ME DEVELOPMENT. THEY HOPE BY THIS MEANS TO ENCOURAGE OTHER PARTICIPANTS TO PUT FORWARD THEIR OWN IDEAS ABOUT WAYS IN WHICH AUB COULD MAKE ITS ACTIVITIES MORE RESPONSIVE AND RELEVANT TO PARTICULAR DEVELOPMENTAL NEEDS IN THEIR RESPECTIVE COUNTRIES. IN EYES OF AUB SPONSORS, CONFERENCE HOPEFULLY WOULD RESULT IN DEEPER UNDERSTANDING AMONG ALL PARTICIPANTS OF UNIVERSITY'S POTENTIAL AS EXPANDED OR REINVIGORATED FORCE FOR CONTRIBUTING MORE EFFECTIVELY TO DEVELOPMENTAL NEEDS THROUGHOUT AREA WHICH AUB HAS TRADITIONALLY SERVED. IN ADDITION, AUB PARTICIPANTS WOULD BE RECEPTIVE TO ANY SPECIFIC IDEAS FOR NEW PROJECTS OR CHANGES IN UNIVERSITY'S EXISTING PROGRAMS THAT MIGHT SURFACE AT CONFERENCE. THEY ALSO ENVISAGE CONFERENCE SERVING AS INITIAL SPARK FOR FUTURE CONTACTS AND MEETING OF THIS NATURE SO AS TO PERMIT CONTINUING DIALOGUE WITH ARAB GOVTS INTERESTED IN BENEFITTING FROM WHAT AUB HAS TO OFFER IN GENERAL FIELDS OF EDUCATION AND DEVELOPMENT.

3. AUB'S DEAN OF ARTS AND SCIENCES HAS CREATED SPECIAL TASK FORCE TO PLAN AND ORGANIZE THIS CONFERENCE EARLY IN 1975. ORGANIZERS' MOST IMMEDIATE PROBLEM IS TO COMPILE LIST OF APPROPRIATE (IN TERMS OF THEIR KNOWLEDGE OF AND INVOLVEMENT IN DEVELOPMENTAL AFFAIRS IN THEIR RESPECTIVE COUNTRIES, AS WELL AS IN TERMS OF THEIR INFLUENCE WITHIN THEIR RESPECTIVE GOVTS) ARAB PERSONALITIES TO WHOM INVITATIONS SHOULD BE ADDRESSED. ALTHOUGH THEY ARE ANXIOUS TO KEEP CONFERENCE ENTIRELY AN AUB-SPONSORED AFFAIR, THEY HAVE PRIVATELY REQUESTED USG ADVICE -- BASED ON INFO POSSESSED BY ACTION ADDRESSEES -- IN LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PUTTING TOGETHER LIST OF POTENTIAL INVITEES FROM VARIOUS ARAB COUNTRIES. (DUE TO AUB'S LIMITED RESOURCES IMPOSED BY ITS CURRENT FINANCIAL SQUEEZE, INVITEES WOULD BE REQUIRED TO PROVIDE FOR THEIR OWN TRANSPORTATION AND OTHER EXPENSES IN CONNECTION WITH CONFERENCE.)

4. ACTION REQUESTED: WE REGARD CONFERENCE PROJECT AS WELCOME AND POTENTIALLY IMPORTANT STEP WITH LONG-

NEEDED REAPPRAISAL BY AUB OF ITS EDUCATIONAL PRIORITIES AND
ROLE VIS-A-VIS ACCELERATING DEVELOPMENTAL NEEDS OF AREA
AT LARGE. PROVIDING DEPT SEES NO OBJECTION, REQUEST
ADDRESSEE POSTS CABLE US THEIR IN-HOUSE RECOMMENDATIONS
RE POTENTIAL INVITEES FOR TRANSMITTAL TO AUB AS SOON AS
POSSIBLE. (FYI: AUB INITIATIVE WOULD NOT BE HELPED BY
PUBLIC DISPLAY OF USG INVOLVEMENT. WHILE WE BELIEVE
EFFORT WORTHWHILE AND DESERVING OF KING OF SUPPORT BY
ADDRESSEES REQUESTED, WE STRONGLY CONVINCED THAT
ADDRESSEE POSTS SHOULD STRICTLY AVOID DISCUSSION OF
SUBJECT WITH HOST GOVT OFFICIALS OR OTHERS IN
PREPARING THEIR RECOMMENDATIONS... END FYI)
UNIVERSITY OFFICIALS WOULD THEN BE IN POSITION TO CONTACT
INVITEES DIRECTLY.
HOUGHTON

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